The Core Values Model: The Four Expressions of Self

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How I Think

The first of the four expressions of self within the sphere in the Core Values Model is called Cognition, or "How I Think." Its function asks: "How do I view myself as a person?" How one thinks is based on his foundation of core values, and it flows from this primary source and is also the internal processing of "who I am" (internal monologue, self-talk). Thinking also processes the world in which one lives, and how one interacts with his environment moment by moment.

Two famous philosophers who hypothesized the relationship between cognition and the awareness of self were Renee Descartes and John Locke. They postulated that in order for one to be self-aware, and therefore to have an identity, one must have an active and thinking consciousness, thus validating the connection between ones thinking and his identity. As previously stated, Descartes is most famous for his quote: "Cogito ergo sum—I think therefore I am."[1] He implied that the self could not exist without conscious self-awareness. Similarly, Locke's theory states that the very "criteria of identity depends on consciousness."[2] Therefore, the self cannot exist without thought. Likewise, it can be inferred that thought cannot exist without self because, logically, existence must be a criterion for action. These famous suppositions provide strong support for the fact that there is a definitive link between the concepts of "how I think" and "who I am" because they are both interdependent upon each another.

Furthermore, how one thinks determines how he consciously and unconsciously interprets and defines his values. Cognition internally defines the standard by which one evaluates self, and how one rates and perceives self in comparison to others.[3] This social patterning is defined as any external interchange between oneself and his environment, including one-to-one, familial, and social interrelatedness. How one thinks also defines how one views or perceives himself, and thus, subsequently establishes the direction for how he feels and behaves. Costa et al. discusses how personality, self and self-perception are dependent on five factors that are overtly reliant upon thinking and consciousness for existence.[4] These five factors are stated to include:

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[1] Marshall, "A Critical Theory of Self: Wittgenstein, Nietzsche, Foucault," 75-91.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Paul T. Costa, & Robert R. McRae, *NEO Five-Factor Inventory* (Odessa, Florida: Psychological Assessment Resources, 1992).

- Neuroticism (anxiety, depression, hostility, impulsivity, vulnerability to stress, self-consciousness)
- Extraversion (warmth, activity, positive emotion, gregariousness, assertiveness, excitement-seeking)
- Openness to experience (fantasy, feelings, actions, aesthetics, values, ideas)
- Agreeableness (tender mindedness, altruism, compliance, modesty, truth, straightforwardness)
- Conscientiousness (order, dutifulness, competence, deliberation, self-discipline, achievement striving)[5]

Without the existence of thinking, the formation and endurance of the self is impossible. Likewise, the self cannot be present without conscious interaction with one's environment and interrelatedness with others. The thinking self then results in motivations, emotions, actions and an understanding of the world around him with reference to the values and judgments imposed by those perceptions. Since values give meaning to actions, cognitive understanding of a value or belief gives meaning, either positive or negative, to the subsequent behavior. So then, values have a cognitive structure (how I think), which is the internal processing of self that couples with emotion (how I feel), which lead to action (what I do).[6]

Additionally, one's values structure and identity function within both components of subjective experiences and objective truth, every value being challenged by the inevitable internal conflict, consciously and unconsciously. Each value is also being challenged by the socially patterned value structures every person lives within. Kang discusses three theories on this notion put forth by William James, James Baldwin and Charles Cooley. All three of these scholars affirm the fact that personal values and perceptions are entirely dependent on an individual consciousness that is comprised of subjective experiences and social interactions.[7]

William James states that there is a distinction between two separate portions of the thinking self, the "I" and the "Me." The "I" is composed of personal observations and experiences, whereas the "Me" is composed of all that a person perceives to be his own. The "Me" is broken down into three parts, the "Material Me," the "Social Me," and the "Spiritual Me." The "Material Me" is comprised of physical aspects such as one's body, possessions and family. The "Social Me" encompasses all of the acknowledgement and recognizance that one understands to

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[5] Ibid.

[6] Hitlin et al. "Values: Reviving a Dormant Concept," 118-137.

[7] S. Steve Kang, "The Socioculturally Constructed Multivoiced Self as Framework for Christian Education of Second Generation Korean American Young Adults" *Religious Education* 97, no. 1 (2002): 81-96.

receive from others. The "Spiritual Me" is composed of one's subjective perceptions of how they understand life through their feelings, actions and experiences.[8]

James Baldwin and Charles Cooley focused on how the conscious self is developed through social mirroring and imitation. Throughout life, one is inevitably involved in various social interactions that cause one to imitate or mimic the actions or attitudes of others. This is the defense mechanism called Identification, which will be discussed in the defense mechanism section. The self is, in part, formed through these emulations when one consciously or unconsciously decides to alter one's values or patterns of thinking and behavior to be in accordance with social cues. This can happen concretely when one is told to alter his core self, but also when one simply thinks that such a change is necessary because of how he imagines others to perceive him.[9]

As we attempt to place one's thinking, feelings and behavior into an orderly configuration, several variables come to light which prevent rigid patterning, and thus, necessitating a more fluid perspective regarding the orders of cognition, feeling and behavior. One variable to be considered is intuition. LeDoux, who had performed research on the human emotional brain, concluded that the brain registers emotional meaning of stimulus prior to processing of the same stimulus by the perceptive system, which argues against the notion that cognitions create emotion.[10] Since the amygdale, or emotional brain, processes stimulus twice as fast as the neocortex, or the thinking brain, the neocortex does not have time to intervene to stop emotional reactions.[11] It is plausible that this initial emotional perception is intuition, which establishes the direction that one's cognition will take. Yet, emotions must have a cognitive base, even if it is subconscious—even if the person is unaware of the cognitive base (e.g. one does not feel angry unless he had perceived, either consciously or subconsciously, that he or others had been wronged).

Nevertheless, the Core Values Model recognizes the complexity and interwoven properties of the expressions of self. Included in this multifaceted configuration of reaction and expression are mental images. An example of reaction to mental images would be someone remembering an argument that made him angry. Once that person recalls the image of the argument, he will automatically re-experience anger, and he may experience that emotional affect without an actual train of thought connected to it; thus, according to Greenberg, schemas have the conceivable ability to initiate emotion without cognition, yet most other theorists still maintain thought is present, albeit unconscious.[12]

Emotions generate the propensity to act in specific ways (behavior) in response to an environmental factor, which sets a basic mode of information

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[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Leslie Greenberg, "Emotion and Cognition in Psychotherapy: The Transforming Power of Affect" *Canadian Psychology* 49, no. 1 (2008): 49-59.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

processing into motion (cognition).[13] Yet, how would one know the specific direction of action if there were not a basic level of thinking functioning either before or at the same time? This notion also brings into discussion the role of behavioral reinforcement, which would be a habitual response to one's environment. Butera postulates that these responses come from judgments formed from both rationality and will.[14] Reason is how "we grasp truths to direct our actions" and will is "how we move ourselves to pursue things judged by reason to be good."[15] Butera states that this informs cogitative power, which, "under guidance of reason, issues judgments about suitability or unsuitability of sensibly perceived individuals."[16]

Cogitative power is entirely dependent on subjectivity and individual perception, and supersedes emotion because social stimuli first results in judgments, then in conscious meanings attributed to those judgments, and finally result in emotional, and then possibly behavioral responses. This, again, does not mean that the configuration of social stimuli, judgments, conscious meaning, emotional reaction and behavioral response must take place in this order. The configuration is always orderly, but seldom rigid. From ones unique perception stems intuition, which then leads to judgment or conscious meaning before resulting in emotional response.

Memorative power then enters the equation because subjective experiences and judgments are stored in the memory so that similar stimuli can result in similar responses.[17] Whether conscious or unconscious, memories serve to trigger intuitions, and when the experiences and responses are consistently patterned in the same fashion, cognitive reinforcement, or habit, occur. Without cognition, this process could not persist. Our ability to make distinctions and connections between what we perceive through our senses is the same ability that allows us to judge the worth of those experiences. Stimuli must be judged before they can cause emotion because stimuli alone would merely cause a physiological response. A judgment is necessary for an emotional response to be formed.

Most theorists believe that cognition, or evaluative thoughts, serve as the basis for emotion. Thomas Aquinas postulated this notion in his theory of Thomistic Grounding for Cognitive Therapy:

1. Emotions are caused by evaluative thoughts.
2. Rules for evaluating our experiences operate without our being aware of them.
3. The application of these rules to stimuli results in evaluative thoughts.

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[13] Ibid.
[14] Butera, "Thomas Aquinas and Cognitive Therapy: An Exploration of the Promise of Thomistic Psychology," 347-367.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.

4. These evaluative thoughts are accessible to the person experiencing the emotions.
5. The specific content of an evaluative thought leads to a specific emotional response.
6. Emotional disorders are caused by incorrect evaluative thoughts, which can be modified through rational considerations.
7. Habituation, in addition to awareness of such evaluative thoughts, is necessary to change incorrect evaluative thoughts and to inculcate correct ones.[18]

These theories have significant implications for treating emotional dysfunction and cognitive maladjustments in psychotherapy because of the obvious relationship between consciousness (how I think) and emotional responses (how I feel). Every feeling has a latent meaning until it is explicated because there is always, either consciously or unconsciously, a cognitive process behind an emotion.

Drummond discusses the concept of felt-meaning, which is when a strong emotion or feeling forces a person to interrupt their normal course of general observation in order to infer the meaning behind it. Subconsciously, they may not be aware of what they are doing, but the process is still there because emotion cannot plausibly exist without a latent meaning behind it.[19] Without conscious intervention, an individual could improperly evaluate a strong emotion to be a reflection of reality instead of a response to an immediate experience. This is why subjective experiences hold such sway over cognitions. One's feelings are stored as realities instead of as responses to stimuli.

Whiting states that one "cannot treat problems with emotions without treating the cognitions behind them... emotions cannot contradict thoughts because that would require emotions to have representational characteristic of thought when they are really just affective states."[20] The very nature of cognitions is that they encompass the ability to make judgments and incorporate information into an existing schema. This is in opposition to the nature of feelings, which are primarily emotive responses to stimuli. Whiting implies that emotions therefore cannot contradict cognitions because they do not have the ability to make the judgments and draw the connections necessary to do so. Thus, identifying and changing the cognitions behind the emotional responses is the only way to manage and redirect those emotional responses, but in order to change cognition, one must address his core values.

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Drummond, "Conceptualizing the Efficacy of Mindfulness of Bodily Sensations in the Mindfulness-based Interventions," 39-47

[20] Demien Whiting, "Some More Reflections on Emotions, Thoughts and Therapy" *Philosophy, Psychiatry and Psychology* 13, no. 3 (2006): 255-260.

Segall postulates "emotions stem from cortical, sympathetic and adrenal hyper-arousal and that "what I feel" can be challenged and changed with cognitive awareness, or "how I think," of the somatic and affective cues."[21] This has implications for psychotherapy in that "how I think" can directly affect "how I feel" by using soothing and relaxation techniques to interrupt the flow of emotional responses and interject conscious reasoning. Subsequently, "what I do" as a response to "how I feel" can be altered with cognitive intervention. Thus, "what I do" can affect "how I feel" because "what I do" is dictated by "what I think." Effectively, using cognitive techniques can identify, challenge and change cognitions associated with feelings and experiences; thus, also changing one's behavior and the rationale behind his feelings. Another example of this relationship would be the intervention technique used by EMDR therapy. As previously noted, EMDR entails moving feelings and limbic information to the higher cortical areas of the brain so one may reprocess faulty repressed feelings rationally (cognitively).[22]

"Who I am" (sense of self) is developed through cognitive appraisals of subjective experiences. The experience causes an emotion, which is judged by cognitions, and then internalized into the schema of the sense of self. We create a pattern of emotional responses to stimuli based on our subjective judgments, but the best way to challenge and change those judgments and therefore the responses, is to meet them with objective truth. Objective truth leaves no room for further subjectivity. If the person believes the objective truth is correct and that their subjective views are prone to inconsistencies and fallibility, he can more easily change his views and responses because he has accepted his own imperfection and limitations. Once a person develops the insight to accept that his views are fallible, he will be able to accept the notion of challenging and changing those views more easily.

What I Do

The second component of the ring is called Behavior, or "What I Do." It asks: "How does the way I think, feel and view myself affect my choices?" "What I do" is the external expression of my internal values. One's behavioral expression is a choice, which is subsequently carried out on the conscious, subconscious or unconscious levels. Regardless of which level one's behavior is processing on, there is cognitive activity underlying each choice of action. Cognitions are one's mediating processes between the environmental stimulus and his behavioral response. This may be why we sometimes do things that we are cognizant of, and at other times not aware of, or how we may respond to someone else's behavior intuitively, rationally, or in a maladaptive or inappropriate way.[23]

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[21] Segall, "Mindfulness and Self-Development in Psychotherapy," 143-163

[22] Shapiro, *EMDR: The Breakthrough,* 10-11.

How does one's core values affect the choices that he makes? How does a different person's expressed core values (another's unique and individual blend of subjective experiences and truth) and thinking influence his actions? How might my core values prompt me to misinterpret another's choices? What positive and negative interactions take place between oneself and his environment as a whole based on how he defines himself, how he thinks, and thus perceives the world around him?

"Who I am" and "what I do" are not simply connected in one direct line because if so, one would always act selfishly in order to fulfill his personal needs. Factors like empathy demonstrate the disruption between "who I am" and "what I do" because they have the ability to change the course of behavior from being self-serving to altruistic. Cognitions or feelings are by nature insufficient to motivate behavior towards serving altruistic or moral imperatives. There must be an understanding of how behavior affects others as well as the self.

Marshall discusses Schopenhauer's theory on the relationship between action and thinking in saying that, "consciousness of the self is not enough for the self to exist—will (action) is necessary... the thinking self is an illusion; the acting self is what brings about the reality of self."[24] Without action and the understanding of how action affects not only the individual but also others, the self can only exist in theory. So then, thinking, which is based upon an exclusive combination of experiences and transformation by truth, in addition to several other variables including intuition, reasoning, perception and feelings, underlies the choices one makes. These variables only have significance to the person if they are assigned to the expression of self, thereby gaining an understanding of how he interacts with his environment.

Moore also discusses the fact that there must be a mediating cognitive process between a stimulus and a behavioral response because without one, actions would be arbitrary and meaningless. He lists eight different mediating cognitions between stimuli and behaviors: "response tendencies, motives, perceptions, purposes, attitudes, moods, interpretations and judgments."[25] He explains this process by saying that, "antecedent conditions (lead to) mentalistic concepts that (lead to) behavior," similar to the scientific process in which "independent variables (lead to) intervening variables which (lead to) dependent variables."[26]

He also postulates that there are three levels to a behavioral response: phylogeny, ontogeny and cultural.[27] The phylogeny level refers to the genetics of the species that influence behavioral responses such as the tendency of a person to

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[23] Christopher D. Brown, "Continuum of Healthy Communication" *International Journal of Reality Therapy* 28, no. 1 (2008): 30-33.

[24] Marshall, "A Critical Theory of Self: Wittgenstein, Nietzsche, Foucault," 75-91.

[25] J. Moore, "Behaviorism" *The Psychological Record* 61 (2011): 449-464.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

close their eyes at a bright light. The ontogeny level refers to the responses dictated by an individual's subjective experiences throughout his lifetime, such as a soldier jumping at a loud noise because they are accustomed to the sound of gunfire, or a person avoiding large dogs because he was once bitten. The cultural level refers to the responses dictated by one's cultural practices and values, such as an American feeling disgust at the idea of another culture's practice of eating dogs.[28] These levels demonstrate the complexity of "what I do" in reference to the many variables that influence the responses.

Again, behavior is the expression of what one thinks. Therefore, in order to change behavior, one has to change what one thinks and how he perceives the world around him. Waller discusses the concept of a "locus of control," which "imposes perspective on the conceptualization of one's experiences."[29] The locus of control has two aspects, the internal and the external. The internal locus of control is the way one perceives his behavior to be a reflection on himself, or "who I am." This encompasses the notion of how one's actions are his own responsibility, and also to what extent his own successes or failures are attributed to those actions.

The external locus of control is defined as the way in which one perceives his behavior to be a product of his environment, and how those actions could be perceived to be outside of his own control. Waller asserts that an internal locus of control is a healthier perspective because it allows for the correct amount of self-responsibility. However, he states that both the internal and external perspectives are necessary in order to understand behavior because one must know why he acts in a certain way, which includes the effects of the environment as well as the internal motivation.[30] The recognition and reconceptualization of beliefs needing to change behavior occurs at the internal, individual level; but an understanding of one's own subjective experiences that have contributed to a particular behavior is also necessary to view the action as a whole.

Rachlin discusses the process by which behaviors are formed, and the interaction between different cognitions, memories and behaviors. He states that outside information must first be perceived and then represented and affirmed by verbal behavior before being stored in memory. From memory, it is processed in the mind and again, represented by verbal behavior. Finally, the individual makes a decision or judgment based on that processing and represents it with nonverbal behavior. That decision is tied to the perceived and experienced consequences of the behavior, which reactivates the memory and starts the cycle all over again.[31] The cognitive aspect is crucial in the formation of the behavioral response because it acts as a mediator and allows judgments and decisions to be formed.

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[28] Ibid.

[29] Bruce N. Waller, "Comparing Psychoanalytic and Cognitive-Behavioral Perspectives on Control" *Philosophy, Psychiatry and Psychology* 11, no. 2 (2004): 125-128.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Howard Rachlin, "Autonomy from the Viewpoint of Teleological Behaviorism" *Social Philosophy and Policy Foundation* (2003): 245-264.

Rachlin also postulates that there are four aspects to behavioral responses: respondents (innate reflexes, such as swallowing), emitted operants (acts of high intrinsic value, such as eating), reinforced operants (actions not done for their own sake but for the sake of an external reinforcer, such as paying for food), and self-controlled acts (actions with little immediate value and no external reinforcement but that are part of a pattern that eventually lead to having a high intrinsic value, such as dieting).[32] Not only does this breakdown of behavior demonstrate the relationship between cognitions, judgments, perceptions, subjective experiences and external factors, but the notion of the self-controlled act also shows the impact of values on behavior. Self-controlled acts are often done in accordance with personal values and morals ("what I believe"), such as voluntarily donating to charity. One does not gain any immediate benefit, nor is there an external motivation. Rather, the person is performing the act because they believe it to be morally and spiritually correct.

Goff et al. also discusses the relationship between core values and behavior by stating that, "problem behavior arises from a deviant self image which arises from values adopted as guiding principles."[33] He asserts that values are directly related to reasoning, which informs attitude formation and behavior. Value-justification occurs when one's values conflict with one's actions, hence, creating a need for the actions to be justified.[34] For example, someone might hold the value of personal freedom but also support stringent legal restrictions that directly affect their freedom because of a conflicting desire for security.

Goff et al. outlines five common values that inhibit delinquent behavior and two common values that encourage it. Moral respect values (self-respect and being self-respected), sociability values (warm relationships and a sense of belonging), self-actualization values (a sense of accomplishment), excitement values and self-fulfillment values all can motivate one towards acceptable and healthy behaviors if perceived with moderation. How one defines moderation is again based upon his subjective experiences, personal and cultural values system. Hedonistic values (fun and enjoyment) and survival values (security) can lead to delinquent behavior if not kept in moderation as well.[35] Delinquent and undesirable behaviors that result from skewed values can be altered through the value-confrontation method. This method postulates that one can change behavior by changing one's hierarchy and importance of values.[36] Essentially, to change "what I do," one must first change "how I think," and "what I believe," and the perception of his personal and cultural values, which reflect, "Who I am."

Behavior is a choice, whether conscious or unconscious; but either way, it is inevitably a cognitive process. Brown discusses the notion of "choice theory," or the notion that "All we do is behave. We choose our behavior, and we are biologically

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[32] Ibid.
[33] Goff et al. "Terminal Core Values Associated with Adolescent Problem Behaviors," 47-60
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.

driven to fulfill needs of survival, fun, freedom, power, love and belonging."[37] For example, one's choices in romantic partners are motivated by the desire for a quality relationship. However, the definition of a quality relationship is formed, in part, by one's subjective experiences and his values. Ergo, cognitive processes that mediate between the external stimuli in the environment and his behavioral responses inevitably cause one's choices. The fact that we do not always respond in the same way to the same stimulus demonstrates that this process is more than a reflexive action; there is a mediating factor that can change depending on one's perception and cognition.[38]

Greenspan also noted the multiple determinants of behavior. A person may demonstrate the same feeling or the same internal state exhibiting different behaviors. For example, a child who feels angry in response to his father's belittling and making fun of him may behave aggressively. At another time, his reaction to the same type of humiliation may take the shape of obedience and apathy. At still another time, he may behave competitively or in a disorganized way. Therefore, the feelings of anger and humiliation may exhibit itself in several different ways depending on the contextual situations. These examples were only of a son's reaction to his father. One's emotions have the potential to take the form of countless responses depending on the environmental causation, and the other internal factors he may be experiencing. Hence, the principle of multiple determinations suggests that there are multiple relationships between what one observes, and the way another person organizes his experiential world.[39] Once again, Greenspan expresses the complexity of how the cause and effect between an environmental initiation and one's response incorporates every aspect of self-expression in addition to several components of one's core values as he determines the specific behavior to meet the need. Even still, the behavioral manifestation could still be wide-ranging depending on several other variables, including one's motives, perceptions, reasons, attitudes, moods, interpretations and judgments, which reside, in large, within his subjective experience.

In the field of psychology, there has been a division between those who study behavior (behaviorists) and those who study the cognitive elements (cognitivists). Behaviorists assert that studying cognition is too subjective to be of any scientific validity; and cognitivists assert that studying behavior is unnecessary because cognition alone can explain all behavioral patterns. This disunion occurred because of the argument over the validity of scientific research in the field of psychology and has produced a counter-productive divergence of study efforts that could have potentially been more effective if both groups of theorists would recognize the complexity and intertwined nature of the expressions of self.

By separating and studying only a single element of one's expression of self, rather than the person in his entirety, one misses the opportunity to observe the complex interaction between these components of self and self-expression. They are

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[37] Brown, "Continuum of Healthy Communication," 30-33

[38] Ibid.

[39] Greenspan, *The Clinical Interview of the Child*, 2

not, and cannot be, mutually exclusive, nor can either of the components of self be fully understood or examined apart from the others. Observing behavior alone, while potentially more measurable and open to scientific rigor, overlooks how actions are directly related to the cognitive processes, emotional responses, and the unique core values each person is defined by. Primarily, people act in accordance with their values and convictions. Interestingly, we are often willing to hold our values and convictions to be true even though many of them are flawed or contradictory. The ultimate question must be whether or not we will be willing to reevaluate our personal values and beliefs, and modify those that conflict with what has proven itself to be true, even though it may not be measurable in scientific terms.

How I Feel

The third compartment of the ring of the Core Values Model is Emotion, or "How I Feel," which is one's preliminary intuition that forms from his subjective experiences occurring before an interaction, or one's emotional reaction experienced when his environment responds to his externalized expression of internal values (behavior). What are one's emotional responses to the positive and negative interactions in his life (guilt, shame, anxiety, sadness, fear, anger, joy, peace, contentment, happiness, etc.)? One's feelings are a part of how he initially and responsively interprets his experiences. One may take his feelings back to what was done to him ("what I do") or how he thought about a previous situation ("how I think"); but does he take the additional step of trying to understand how his feelings are tied into his core values, specifically his subjective experiences and objective truth? Doing so allows a person to make the necessary changes that will often prevent dysfunctional patterns from continuing.

The Core Values Model clearly demonstrates the complex circuitous nature of the interaction between "how I think," "how I feel" and "what I do." As an individual, one is steered by his thoughts and actions, but moved by his emotions. The "how I think" aspect of self-attempts to dictate one's actions, but it is often challenged by intuition, which is an unconscious component of the "how I feel" variable. "How I think" should control "what I do," but "how I feel" often circumvents the logical solution. All three of these aspects have to work together in order for the outcome to be without internal conflict. "How I feel" should be taken into account by "what I think," and the reasoning of "what I think" should determine the best course of action for "what I do" so that "what I do" is an accurate and acceptable reflection of "how I feel" and subsequently "who I am."

Charles Starkey discusses the theory that values, ethics and virtue are directly related to emotions. He postulates five possible relations between them. The first is that "having an appropriate emotion is a virtuous achievement in and of

itself."[40] Once again, one needs to recognize that virtue might hold different meanings depending on the culture or historical point in time, hence, one's subjective experiences and core values. Nevertheless, throughout the ages, most virtuous acts have been, and are still, homogenous in their definition. This assumes that there is an appropriate emotional response to a stimulus, such as feeling sad at a funeral, as opposed to laughing; and that having that appropriate response means that one is feeling in accordance with his values. This point clearly delineates the relation between "how I feel" and "what I believe" and "who I am."

The second feasible relation is that "it is advantageous to display a certain emotion at times."[41] This implies that by displaying an appropriate emotion, one will be acting in such a way that is beneficial. The third relation states that, "emotions might be essential because of their motivational role."[42] Here Starkey is inferring that emotions can be useful for virtue in that they motivate virtuous action, thus, a cause and effect affiliation between "how I feel" and "what I do."

The fourth relation is that "proper emotion is a mark of virtue because it is indicative of having an appropriate state of mind, including an appropriate understanding."[43] This implies that feeling the appropriate emotion is indicative of one's virtuous state of mind, demonstrating the relationship between "how I feel" and "what I think." The final relation elaborates on this idea by stating that, "emotions are necessary for having particular states of mind, and thus, in certain episodes, having an appropriate understanding regarding the object of the emotion."[44] Ergo, demonstrating the association between "how I feel," "what I think," "what I do" and "who I am."

Starkey also discusses how Aristotle had a similar notion of the relationship between emotion and virtue. Aristotle is quoted as saying:

> It is moral virtue that is concerned with emotions and actions, and I t is in emotions and actions that excess, deficiency, and the medians are found. Thus we can experience fear, confidence, desire, anger, pity and generally any kind of pleasure and pain either too much or too little and in either case, not properly. But to experience this at the right time, toward the right object, toward the right people, for the right reason, and in the right manner- that is the median and the best course, the course that is the mark of virtue.[45]

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[40] Charles Starkey, "Emotion and Full Understanding" *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 11 (2008): 425-454.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.

Starkey further elaborates on the nature of emotions by discussing the relationship between emotion and cognitive awareness. He states that, "our understanding of the object of emotion is largely based on our awareness of the object."[46] One needs to be aware to comprehend and therefore, emotions must have a cognitive element. This cognitive element is tied in with awareness, and emotions help regulate one's awareness by dictating the importance of whatever is being perceived. Our perceptive mind is constantly taking in and processing information at a rate that makes it impossible for us to be consciously aware of everything we perceive. Therefore, our minds need a way of deciding what is important and what is not. Emotions help us to unconsciously establish a hierarchy and dictate the significance of certain variables in order to either be aware of the information, or to discard it. For emotions to do this, they need a reservoir of understanding, namely one's subjective experiences, for these variables to be measured against.

Starkey supports this notion with the datum that, "in states of emotional arousal, there is a funneling of the field of awareness."[47] When one experiences a considerable psychological stressor, his awareness discards unnecessary information and focuses in on the stimulus. Tunnel vision is a typical response to any event that triggers one's fight or flight reaction. In situations where the stressor is unforeseen or outside of one's ability to control, his emotional, cognitive, behavioral and physiological aspects of self will be impacted, the degree to which is dependent upon both the development of, and the level that, his coping and problem-solving skills were affected.

Our emotion-based awareness also has a significant impact on our memory. They, in part, dictate what we do and do not remember based on the importance given to the experience. Again, linking "how I feel" and "what I think" to "who I am," because one defines himself by his experiences. Starkey states that this is why "information associated with emotional arousal is more easily recalled and with more detail than information not associated with emotional arousal."[48] In some instances, one might experience tunnel vision. This can negatively influence our processing of information because the all-encompassing impact of emotions can demand our entire attention, when we still need to be aware of other factors cognitively. For example, if we are upset about something, we often pay less attention to tasks that we need to be doing. Emotions can also distort our awareness and produce faulty understanding, which is why subjective experiences often do not reflect actuality.[49]

An obvious example that demonstrates this emotional hypervigilance and tunnel vision is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which impacts cognitive, emotional and behavioral function, in addition to one's belief systems; in addition to one's core values, both subjective experiences and objective truth. Because one's prior subjective experiences within his core values structure assist him in defining

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[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.

self and his environment in the present, his expectations and anticipations based on those prior experiences maintain hypervigilance in fear that they are vulnerable to assault at any given moment. Perhaps this is why this disorder is classified under the anxieties. PTSD develops because of the overwhelming, sudden and unexpected intensity of an event that causes one to respond with intense fear, helplessness or horror. The force of such a severe psychic blow is beyond one's ability to absorb and accept. Depending on the extent or extreme of the event, the symptoms will impact each area of self-expression to varying degrees, which may even include permanent changes to personality.[50]

Starkey's final point is that emotions are necessary for "full understanding," or the "appropriate understanding of events given our larger values, interests, concerns and goals."[51] While emotions have the potential to cause incorrect subjective interpretations, an investigation into the preconceptions constructed in such cases has the potential to lead one to a fuller and more realistic understanding of not only the event in question, but also into the impact of one's values and motivations. When used in conjunction with cognitive awareness and knowledge of objectivity (objective truth), understanding of emotions is a vital part in the formation and perception of the self.[52]

The Psalms are fantastic examples of what happens when objective truth meets human emotions. Chapter after chapter speaks of men, primarily David, crying out to God in anguish, rejoicing in His Person, expressing doubts, fears, worries and troubles and shouting joy in victory. Yet time after time, God is proclaimed the Lord and King of Creation and His omnipotence is accepted in each circumstance. In one powerful example, the psalmist is overwhelmed with grief, fear and crushing anguish. His spirit is "overwhelmed" and his heart is "appalled" within him, yet he says, "For to You, I lift up my soul... I take refuge in You."[53] Without the objective truth and resources of God, the psalmist would remain driven and enslaved by his emotions. However, objective truth transforms his feelings and experiences into surrender and reliance on God.

Leslie Greenberg also supports the idea that emotions serve as a system of filters that ascribe levels of importance to what is processed in the mind. She refers to emotions as a "fundamentally adaptive resource," stating that they are a "signaling system that communicates intentions and regulates interactions" and that they are what "regulate self and others and gives life meaning."[54] Again, her articulate definition clearly weaves one's emotional, cognitive, behavioral expressions together with one's value system. Importantly, emotional perceptions and responses create "schemas" in the mind that allow the individual to create

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[50] Judith Lewis Herman, "Complex PTSD: A Syndrome in Survivors of Prolonged and Repeated Trauma" *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 5, no. 3 (1992), 377-391.
[51] Starkey, "Emotion and Full Understanding," 425-454
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ps 143.
[54] Greenberg, "Emotion and Cognition in Psychotherapy: The Transforming Power of Affect," 49-59.

subjective understandings of experiences so that one may respond appropriately to similar experiences in the future.

Greenberg also postulates an "emotion-focused view of functioning" that theorizes how emotions are vital in the construction of meaning. She states that, "meaning results from dialectical synthesis of emotion and reason... without emotion there is no motivation to action, without conscious organization, there is no coherence." [55] Essentially, emotions generate behavioral responses and while simultaneously forming cognitive schemas that associate the emotional and behavioral response with the stimulus.

Michael Lacewing outlines how cognitions are crucial in emotional dysfunctions such as affective disorders. He asserts that there exists a "negative feedback loop" in affective disorders, stating that, "Unpleasant events lead the subject to a negative cognitive response or evaluation of the event or themselves. This generates a negative emotion. The emotion in turn increases the unpleasantness experienced in relation to the event."[56] Thereafter, altering one's accumulative subjective experiences. The very nature of an emotional disorder is the fact that "emotions become resistant to cognitive evidence."[57] Thus, the only way to treat such emotional disturbance would be to "interrupt the look by replacing cognitive-evaluative thoughts with alternative understanding." This is where "objective truth" can enter the realm of "how I feel" to redefine the maladaptive or incongruent "subjective experiences" that define self.

Lacewing elaborates on the subjective/objective duality of the effect of cognitions on emotions by differentiating between cognitive and conative. Cognitive refers to the reality of a situation and conative refers to the way one thinks the situation should be. He states that, "emotions are concern-based construal's comprised of impressions (the way things appear to the subject), experiences, judgments, thoughts and beliefs."[58] Individual values are directly affected by these understanding's because one may respond emotionally depending on how a stimulus may either affirm or conflict with his personal values. Lacewing asserts that there are four components to emotions as construals: cognition (information about circumstance), evaluation (relevance to personal concerns), motivation (how it reflects the person's values), and feeling (the response).[59] These results in what he calls feeling towards, or "thinking of with feeling."[60]

Appelt et al. differentiates between types of cognitive emotions as feeling right or feeling good.[61] Feeling right implies a "subjective experience in which people feel their goal is correct and fitting," whereas feeling good implies "a

[55] Ibid.
[56] Michael Lacewing, "Emotion and Cognition: Recent Developments in Therapeutic Practice" *Philosophy, Psychiatry and Psychology* 11, no. 2 (2004): 175-186.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Kirsten C. Appelt, Xi Zou & E. Tory Higgins, "Feeling Right or Being Right: When Strong Assessment Yields Strong Correction" *Motiv Emot* 34 (2010): 316-324.

hedonistic, pleasant and positive mood."[62] According to this theory, emotions can be either value-oriented or basic reflexive responses to either pleasure or pain. The notion of feeling right often conflicts with both cognitions and objective (truth) reality because one often equates the notion of feeling right with being right. This occurs when emotion is allowed to supersede cognition and dictate action. The result is an unwillingness to change problematic emotions or cognitions, or an inability to even recognize a difficulty exists, because the individual believes that their perception is reflective of reality.[63] This lack of insight is one of the criteria of personality disorders, which are pervasive and difficult to treat for this reason. Furthermore, this divergence also demonstrates the internal conflict between one's subjective experiences and objective truth albeit on the unconscious level.

Behaviorists tend to disagree with the notion that cognitions should be used to change emotions. Harned et al. asserts that "disorders with emotional regulation need emotion focused treatment" and that one can change emotion by changing behavior.[64] They outline the dialectical dilemma, which explains "the tension between acceptance of one's emotions as valid and the need to change them to develop a life worth living."[65] They state that this dilemma can be addressed through two possible approaches, mindfulness and opposite action. Mindfulness uses the technique of behavioral exposure, with which an "individual learns to conceptualize behavior as attempts to regulate intense, unwanted emotion."[66] By experiencing emotions without cognitive intervention or responses, the individual is theorized to develop new associations with the stimulus. This is said to alter cognitions without actually addressing them because the change in behavior will modify the cognition automatically. Opposite action also involves exposure to emotional cues, but instead of merely experiencing them, the individual is told to substitute a behavior that contradicts the natural response. This is said to "block the behavior prompted by the emotion's action urge" and promote more effective behavioral responses.[67]

Denise Sloan outlines a similar theory of dividing the concepts of emotion from cognition, but goes a step further and also separates the concept of behavior from emotion as well. Sloane titled her approach as "Emotion-focused therapy." Sloan theorizes that "emotions are the prime motivator in the human experience," and that "cognition and behavior are dependent on affect."[68] The therapist is told to "feel along" with the patient instead of thinking in order to maintain a "non-rational process." The patient is told to merely experience the emotion without focusing on

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[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Melanie S. Harned, Sammy F. Banawan & Thomas R. Lynch, "Dialectical Behavioral Therapy: An Emotion-Focused Treatment for Borderline Personality Disorder" *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy* 36 (2006): 67-75.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Denise M. Sloan, "Emotion-Focused Therapy: An Interview with Leslie Greenberg" *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy* 34, no. 2 (2004): 105-116.

or identifying any associated cognitions or motivations in order to simply "enhance people's emotional intelligence."[69]

This is also a consideration within the EMDR model of treatment. As one concentrates on his feelings during the bi-lateral stimulation procedure, it is postulated that the emotional processing follows the neural pathways to where the trauma is imprinted, thereby focusing on the actual problematic impression instead of on how the problem manifests itself through one's expressions alone.[70] The Core Values Model is in agreement with this supposition because of the interrelatedness of the expressions, and how the expressions collectively weave in through one's experiences, and therefore memories.

What I Believe

Finally, on either the conscious, subconscious or unconscious level, we critique our experiences and formulate situational beliefs about them. This fourth compartment of the ring in the Core Values Model is called Situational Belief, or "What I Believe." It asks: How do one's thoughts, interactions, and subsequent feelings create situational beliefs about self and the world in which he interacts? How do these situational beliefs integrate with one's core values? Do the situations confirm, and therefore reinforce one's core values, or do they conflict with them? It is at this place that one can see the completed cycle where, through situation after situation, one's core values are being challenged by both objective truth and one's subjective past experiences.

According to Eric Snider, the concept of belief is one of circular causality—belief is cause and effect, origin and motivation for pursuit. In order to acquire a belief, one must be motivated to pursue acquisition before owning it. This complicated notion ties in with what Snider refers to as the link between perception and belief. In order for one to hold a belief, he must be able to perceive it. Given that a belief is based on a perception, one must first hold a belief that perception exists and is a reliable means of acquiring subsequent beliefs. Thus, one must begin the search and integration of beliefs with an initial ground belief that the journey is worth pursuing.[71]

Snider discusses several theorists who purport various hypotheses on the concept of belief as it pertains to God and man. David Silver states that belief in God demonstrates a "moral failure" on the part of man. According to Silver, beliefs must be formed based on all available information, held to the highest scientific standards.[72] In his opinion, this criterion for belief disqualifies the concept of an all-powerful deity. However, Paul Draper argues that Silver's assumptions are incorrect

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[69] Ibid.
[70] Shapiro, *EMDR: The Breakthrough,* 10-11.
[71] Eric Snider, "Are Causes of Belief Reasons for Belief? Silver on Evil, Religious Experience and Theism" *Religious Studies* 44 (2008): 185-202.
[72] Ibid.

based on the differentiation between the concepts of belief and hypotheses.[73] The role of a belief is held in the same accordance as faith, the conviction of things unseen. This is reflected in the definition of faith from Hebrews 11:1. A hypothesis, on the other hand, is a postulation whose role is to explain a range of phenomena as part of a scientific explanatory theory.

Hebrews chapter 11, often referred to as the "Great Hall of Faith," calls the believer to faithful endurance by using numerous testimonies from the lives of many of the ancient saints. The author challenges his listeners to live lives of faith according to the pattern seen in those who by faith were obedient to God in their earthly pilgrimages. The general pattern of the author's challenge throughout this chapter includes a two-part formation, which keeps the listener's attention on the centrality of a life of faith for the people of God. He uses the phrase "by faith" over and over again, each time followed by the name of a person who, by his or her own faith or the faith of another took an action by which his or her faith was expressed; after which, the outcome or rationale for the act of faith is stated. Also, in each instance, we see courage, endurance, perseverance, boldness or obedience in the actions of these faithful people, as opposed to the one who "shrinks back" from his or her commitments, which displeases God.[74] Hebrews chapter 11 continually emphasizes the vital link between internal attitudes ("being sure of what we hope for"), and external actions (being "certain of what we do not see").[75]

The simple message of this chapter appears to be hidden in verse six where the author tells us "it is impossible to please God without faith."[76] Therefore, a life of faith according to this verse includes at least three components. First, it involves a life of coming to God, and seeking Him earnestly. This point is in keeping with the author's challenge to approach or "draw near to God."[77] God's people are called to live lives of radical openness to Him and in conversation with Him. Second, it involves believing that God exists. It is absurd to think that a person can sincerely come to God in prayer without first having a firm confidence that He exists. It is this foundational belief in God that supports further acts of faith in which the believer comes to God for help. Third, it involves having confidence that God will reward those who exercise such faith. The acts of persons expressing confidence in the living God do not go unnoticed or unrewarded. God, by His nature and in accordance with His promises, rewards those who act in faith toward Him.

As humans, we are inadequate. However, so were all our predecessors, who also evidenced the grace of God in their lives. In viewing the lives of heroes of the faith listed in Hebrews chapter 11, one can take note of how much sin is cited. This is one of the most refreshing parts of the Bible and it's objective truth—God does not hide the fact that we are all broken, and the author of Hebrews did not go out of his way to only use exemplary people as examples. It is only by God's amazing grace

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[73] Ibid.
[74] Heb 10:37-38
[75] Heb 11:1
[76] Heb 11:6
[77] Heb 4:16; 10:22

that they accomplished the tasks set before them; it is only by that same grace that we can accomplish what God is placing in our lives too.

Use of the term "faith" brings to mind different things for different people, hence, there are several misconceptions regarding its work. One fallacy is that God can only produce good things in lives lived by people in a good way. The aforementioned example further substantiates this thought. Another is that faith's purpose is a life of ease, blessing and prosperity. God is the giver of good gifts, but that is a limited perspective to who He is and how He works.[78] This notion is a popular misconception here in America where we have been spared much of the sufferings of famine and persecution. Another inaccuracy by overstatement is that faith equals doctrine alone. Scripture does refer to faith as a set of beliefs, but the true meaning of faith conveys something much more dynamic and active—a life lived in a trust relationship with God.[79] Active faith unquestionably rests on sound belief, but it cannot be summed up exclusively as a cognitive conclusion.[80] Recall Hebrews 11:1 where it points to both internal attitude and external action.[81]

Another fallacy is that faith is a blind leap into the unknown. Some perceive faith as the antithesis of scientific endeavor; ergo, a true scientist cannot also be a person of faith because of the inability to measure or test one's belief. A final myth regarding faith is that it is simply a life of reflective devotion to any god one chooses to follow. Henceforth, being a person of deep faith might apply to a follower of Buddha, Krishna, or Christ. Thus, faith is made synonymous with spirituality.[82] Within this misinterpretation, objective truth is not as important as the sincerity he or she has, so that one's sincerity alone might transform him into a more purposeful and loving individual. None of these approaches to faith does justice to the dynamic, challenging portrait of authentic Christian faith as demonstrated in Hebrews chapter 11. Each of these false notions is inadequate and pale in comparison to objective truth.

Six factors are distinguishable to establish a working description of faith according to the previous Biblical text.[83] Firstly, faith involves confident action. Most of the examples in this chapter include a person acting confidently in accordance to what God says. In verses 32-34, the author uses several verbs to describe the actions of the patriarchs and saints—they conquered, administered, gained, shut, quenched, escaped, routed, and became powerful.

Secondly, true faith is action taken in response to the unseen God and His promises. Faith is not a mere static belief or cognitive assent. Rather, true faith spurs one to act in accordance with God's objective truth. God has spoken, and that is reason enough for these great people of faith to step forward with boldness,

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[78] Ja 1:17
[79] Gal 1:23; 1 Tim 4:1, 6; Jude 3
[80] Ja 2:14-26
[81] George H. Guthrie, *The NIV Application Commentary of Hebrews* (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1998), 373-394.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.

confidence and tenacity. God had manifested Himself; they were backed up by the Unseen, and that was the only needed motivating force. Henceforward, believers of every generation are also called to an active, confident faith that finds its motivation in the unseen God. Anything short of this faith needs to be reevaluated.

Faith's antithesis is self-sufficiency. Human nature, especially in an autonomy-driven culture of entrepreneurialism as America, seeks blazing one's own trail—doing it "my way." This social independence and freedom permeates one's view of his relationship with God as well. The old saying "God helps those who help themselves" is not a Biblical precept. In fact, God helps those who can no longer help themselves much more often. It is sobering to contemplate a God Who loves so completely that He will still accept someone even when that person comes to God as his last resort. As previously covered, that is the specific reason why humanity needs God's grace, which is only found in His Son Jesus. So, if faith's antithesis is self-sufficiency, faith is cogently God-sufficiency. To rest and trust in the heavenly Father's love, acceptance and grace rather than going it alone may be mankind's utmost struggle.

Thirdly, faith involves God's working extraordinary miracles in the lives of ordinary people. God often proves His greatest work through the lives of those who appear to be the lowliest. Hebrews chapter 11 is known as "The Great Hall of Faith," and so it is. Readers tend to think of these on the list of the faithful as especially heroic. Yet, there is much about each person on the list that was less than admirable—Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Gideon and David—each having sin, flaws and serious short comings. One might actually think the author is stretching things a bit by holding these people as exemplary, except for one thing— real faith is expressed through real people. These people are not heroes because they were perfect, but because they labored with God in accordance to His will, seeking to be God-sufficient. Thus, we too are eligible for enlistment to the "Great Hall of Faith."

Fourthly, faith works in a variety of situations. Faith is so often coupled with healing in the New Testament, but it is not mentioned on the list of circumstances in Hebrews chapter 11. One can see an offering, transportation to heaven, building of a boat, moving of a family to an unknown destination, the ability to have a child and then the obedience of offering that child back to God again, seeing into the future, defying authority, choosing mistreatment over pleasure, suffering persecution, and so on, but not necessarily restoration. Faith is often the more difficult road to travel; yet it is required at times for God's purposes. This point clearly challenges the narrow-minded prosperity gospel fallacy.

Fifthly, faith may have a variety of outcomes as well. Sometimes faith has an immediate and positive outcome, as the Red Sea experience and the wall of Jericho, which "came tumbling down." Yet, sometimes faith has a delayed outcome. Abraham and Sarah had to wait for their son, Isaac; and the promise of multiple offspring would not be experienced until future generations. Faith may also have a negative outcome. One sees examples of torture, mocking, beatings, destitution, stoning, and imprisonment, and so on throughout the Scriptures. These illustrations do not easily

fit into our western Christian philosophy of "see all the wonderful things that God wants to do in your life," yet the picture is truly Biblical. Sometimes one does not see the positive results of his faith in this life, but we wait with confidence for the blessings to come.

Sixthly, God rewards faith. One resounding theme throughout this chapter is that God's people look beyond the immediate to grasp the importance of future imperatives. Faith involves believing that "He rewards those who earnestly seek Him." One primary reward stands out in this chapter—God's commendation, His "well done" that every true Believer longs to hear.[84]

So then, how might we put all of these characteristics into a working definition of faith? "Faith is confidence that results in action, carried out in a variety of situations, by ordinary people, in response to the unseen God and His promises, with various earthly outcomes, but always the ultimate outcome of God's commendation and reward."[85] In its simplest essence, Biblical faith involves people orienting their lives to God and His objective truth as opposed to the perceived realities and maladjusted values espoused by the world (subjective experiences). This means that in one's family life, work, education, intellect, social life, hobbies and many other contexts, he is called to reject a posture of fear and self-sufficiency, and to live his life with bold confidence in the unseen God, His Word, and His ultimate reward.

Snider goes on to discuss the argument that belief in a good and gracious God conflicts with the reality of suffering in the world. Silver's proposition about belief being a moral failure because of the conflicts made known by scientific and modern understanding represents one side of this argument, that suffering disproves a rational belief in a gracious God.[86] However, Swineburne argues against Silver with his theory of how humans pursue beliefs in reference to how God created man. God did not create man to acquire knowledge, or belief, without the means of using his senses. Thus, the acquisition of knowledge requires the world to have stable properties, regularity and order.[87] If God were to change the stable properties of the world to prevent suffering, there would be no basis for belief or the acquisition of knowledge. For example, if one were to kick a rock and feel pain, he would acquire the knowledge that rocks are hard. If God prevented that pain by changing the properties of rocks whenever they are kicked, there would be no way for man to pursue knowledge.

Similarly, Platinga supports the notion that God's creation of the world is the basis for belief and the acquisition of knowledge. He states that God brought everything into the world in a good and perfect condition, and that humans had an innate desire to pursue God and a perceptual knowledge of Him. When humans turned away from God, their desire and perceptual knowledge of God decreased.

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[84] Heb 11:2, 39
[85] George H. Guthrie, *The NIV Application Commentary of Hebrews*, 373-394.
[86] Snider, "Are Causes of Belief Reasons for Belief? Silver on Evil, Religious Experience and Theism," 185-202
[87] Ibid.

They began to pursue lesser or diminished goods as the basis for belief and knowledge, thus the opportunities for pain and suffering increased.[88] Consequently, people increasingly saw other things responsible for their circumstances than God. The basis of belief is directly connected to Creation, the fall and sinful condition of man, and subsequently the pursuit of subjectivity over objective truth.

Christian apologist N. T. Wright believes, "while heaven is indisputably God's realm, it's not some distantly remote galaxy hopelessly removed from human reality." [89] In the ancient Judaic worldview, Wright notes, the two dimensions intersect and overlap so that the divine bleeds over into this world.[90] This view changed during the Middle Ages, as depicted by Michelangelo and Dante's portrayal of heaven and hell, which Wright does not believe is an accurate picture based on what we read in the New Testament. In reviewing The Lord's Prayer in the Gospels, one can see the early Christians' understanding based on Christ's words, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," with its main emphasis on forgiveness and loving one's neighbor.[91] Much has changed, as present day scholars know much more about the early church than our predecessors from the past several centuries.[92]

Alan Tjeltvelt's demonstrates the pervasiveness of belief through the many concepts and understandings of love. Secular psychology and Christian understanding of love is vastly different and has significant implications for the concepts of self, emotion, behavior and cognition. The Christian understanding of love is that it comes from God and encompasses and connects emotion, thinking, action, spirituality, ethics, values, choices, and relationships.[93] It can be an emotion to be felt but moreover, love is a cognitive understanding as well as an action because it is not of the natural world. God as an entity is love.[94] God also performs love as an action.[95] Furthermore, God requires those who are followers of Jesus Christ to do the same.[96] Altruism is an action but it comes from love, an emotion, as well as a cognitive value-based obligation. The major problem with viewing love subjectively as opposed to objectively is that without an understanding of God, love appears to be in direct opposition to human nature. In the subjective worldview, love can be misconstrued and viewed as negative because it is confused with simple emotions and basic motivating behaviors that cause harmful actions such as codependent relationships.[97] When viewed objectively, it is understood that love

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[88] Ibid.

[89] John Murawski, "Our idea of heaven wrong, says N. T. Wright" *The Christian Century* 129, no. 12 (2012): 18.

[90] Appendix F.

[91] Mt 6:9-15

[92] John Murawski, "Our idea of heaven wrong, says N. T. Wright."

[93] Alan C. Tjeltvelt, "Psychology's Love-Hate Relationship with Love: Critiques, Affirmations, and Christian Responses" *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 34, no. 1 (2006): 8-22.

[94] 1 Jn 4:8.

[95] Rom 5:8.

[96] 1 Cor 13:1-8

[97] Tjeltvelt, "Psychology's Love-Hate Relationship with Love: Critiques, Affirmations and Christian Responses," 8-22.

cannot be simply one aspect of the self; it encompasses the self as a whole in the same way that God does.

Donald C. Maldari writes,

> The cross was Christ's ultimate sacrifice. It was his ultimate act of self-gift: it provided the ultimate expression of his love. The only way for Jesus to avoid death would have been to renounce the love that motivated his life and work. Jesus was executed because he refused to stop loving; he refused to stop challenging the world's status quo. He seems to have known that his mission in life was to love without limits. In his agony in the garden on the night before his execution, he rejected any compromise of that mission.[98]

The Lutheran bishop Anders Nygren illuminates an important distinction in our understanding of love in his work Agape and Eros stating, "Eros is a love that is always somehow characterized by selfishness or self-concern. It seeks the good for oneself. The word never appears in the New Testament. Agape is a love that is characterized by selflessness and a total freedom from self-concern and preoccupation."[99] It seeks the good without disdaining one's own good.

Importantly, Maldari continues,

> Jesus' agape led him inexorably to the cross and then, equally inexorably, to the resurrection and ascension. Jesus was agape incarnate. His entire life was an actualization of selfless love. The focus of his existence was the Father and his will for the reconciliation of the whole world with himself. He loved the world as the Father loves the world, free from selfishness and self-concern. His motivation was the mutual and perfect   love between himself and the Father. Nothing could stop him from loving, not even the loss of peace and tranquility. Peace and tranquility were not his goal. His goal was to do the Father's will, to make the world holy through his love.[100]

Beliefs and belief systems are closely tied to the other elements in the Core Values Model. Flannelly et al. states that beliefs run as undercurrent for many psychiatric disorders, such as depression and anxiety, which commonly result from distorted, primitive beliefs about personal safety and dangers of the external environment. Belief structures impact an individual on a biological, emotional, behavioral and psychiatric level. As areas of the brain assess a potential threat, existing beliefs about the world interact with that assessment in order to form an

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[98] Donald C. Maldari, "The Triumph of the Cross" *America* 190, no. 8 (2004): 8-11.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.

emotional or behavioral response. Subsequently, those beliefs and responses form schemas in the brain that often result in psychiatric symptoms.

Flannelly et al. postulates that if psychiatric symptoms and emotional dysregulation can be caused by belief structures, they similarly can be ameliorated by cognitively changing those beliefs.[101] Flannelly et al. demonstrates the validity of this hypothesis in a study of the correlation between beliefs about God and spiritual and mental health. The study found that individuals who hold beliefs about God that include the characteristics of loving, kind, in control and close typically demonstrate healthier mental and spiritual well-being. Individuals who hold beliefs about God that include characteristics such as absent, controlling, punishing or distant typically demonstrate unhealthy or dysfunctional mental and spiritual well-being.[102]

The Bible, which is objective truth, tells us that God is indeed loving (1 John 4:8), kind (Romans 6:23), in control (Psalm 33:11-13) and has a close, personal nature with His children (Psalm 145:18). The consequent superior mental and spiritual health is a clear demonstration of how belief in truth transforms all the aspects of self, whereas belief in subjective falsities undermines that potential. As one interrelates with the world around him, belief interacts with biological processes, emotions, behaviors and cognitions to color the expressions of self. Belief grounded in truth produces an identity grounded in truth. Conversely, ungrounded or deficient subjective beliefs produce equally transient identities.

The concept of belief is one of context; it is both an external and internal element. Externally, it is a product of history, society, culture and politics. Internally, it is a product of the individual from the inherent self and his subjective interactions with the environment. Belief serves both as a product of actions as well as an element that is essential to the success of future actions. However, belief also takes on a plethora of different meanings according to various contexts. Some define belief as "an idea held to be true." Others define it as "a disposition; an underlying mental attitude or behavior pattern that manifests in audible or visual observable contexts."[103] It can also be defined as "the interior state of human beings towards ideas that they hold some ambivalence towards."[104] In this definition, belief hinges on the fact that it must harbor some sense of doubt.

This difficult-to-define concept is further convoluted by the fact that beliefs are also limited by social acceptability. Beliefs that are not viewed as either socially or culturally acceptable are then considered irrational and are renamed as "superstition." This makes it incredibly difficult to pinpoint legitimate beliefs from irrational perspectives. Furthermore, Magliocco also recognizes beliefs are also commonly differentiated from the concept of faith, stating that, "the difference between faith and belief is that belief doesn't require an acceptance of a coherent set

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[101] Kevin J. Flannelly, Kathleen Galek, Christopher G. Ellison & Harold G. Koenig, "Beliefs about God: Psychiatric Symptoms and Evolutionary Psychiatry" *Journal of Religious Health* 49 (2010): 246-261.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Sabine Magliocco, "Beyond Belief: Context, Rationality and Participatory Consciousness" *Western Folklore* 71, 1 (2012): 5-24.
[104] Ibid.

of propositions or be accepted in every circumstance."[105] Based on this perspective, beliefs are limited to transient perspectives that can change as the parameters of circumstances vary. Faith, on the other hand, is an extension of belief that has become concrete; it does not change regardless of the external environmental factors.

In this sense, belief would be more synonymous with subjectivity and faith with objectivity, in that the former is ephemeral and the latter enduring. However faith grounded in a false set of beliefs potentially cements a person to a skewed and distorted sense of the world as well as self. Such a misconstrued perception can lead to equally impaired or faulty cognitive schemas, emotional or behavioral actions and reactions, and interpretations or understanding of reality. Therefore, it is absolutely crucial that belief, and thus faith, is grounded firmly in the objective truth of Christ.

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[105] Ibid.